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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/014,832	12/11/2001	Michael Lebner	0156-2003	1823
7590	10/08/2003		EXAMINER	
KEVIN M. FARRELL, PIERCE ATWOOD ONE NEW HAMPSHIRE AVENUE SUITE 350 PORTSMOUTH, NH 03801			LEWIS, KIM M	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3761	
			DATE MAILED: 10/08/2003	

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/014,832	LEBNER, MICHAEL
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Kim M. Lewis	3761

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 2/13/02, 12/23/02 and 3/13/03.

2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-41 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1-41 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on 13 February 2002 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

11) The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) approved b) disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.

12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All b) Some * c) None of:

1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).

a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

15) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 5.

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s) _____.

5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)

6) Other: *Detailed Action* .

DETAILED ACTION

Drawings

1. The corrected or substitute drawings were received on 2/13/02. These drawings are approved by the examiner.

Information Disclosure Statement

2. The information disclosure statement filed 3/20/02 have been received and made of record in the application file wrapper. Note the acknowledged form PTO-1449 enclosed herewith.

Change of Address

3. The change or address form filed 12/23/02 has been received and made of record in the application file wrapper.

Small Entity Status

4. The small entity status papers filed 2/13/02 have been received and made of record.

Claim Objections

5. Claim 11 is objected to because of the following informalities: Claim 11, the phrase "and/or" should be deleted from the claim and replaced with --and-- and --or-- in the appropriate place in the claim. Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

6. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter, which the applicant regards as his invention.

7. Claim 11 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

As regards claim 11, the phrase "said adaptation" lacks proper antecedent basis.

Double Patenting

8. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and, *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

9. Claims 1-41 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-3, 6-7, 19-21 of U.S. Patent No. 6,329,564 ("the '564 patent").

As regards claims 1-20, the '564 patent substantially discloses all features of the claimed invention except a single first elongated connector and a single second elongated connector. Instead the '564 patent discloses a plurality of first and second elongated connectors. However, it has been held that the omission of an element and its function in a combination, where the remaining elements perform the same functions as before, involves only routine skill in the art. *In re Karlson*, 311 F.2d 581, 136 USPQ 184 (CCPA 1963).

As such, the omission of some of the first and second elongated connectors, leaving only a single first and a single second elongated connector would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art since the remaining first and second elongated connectors perform the same function.

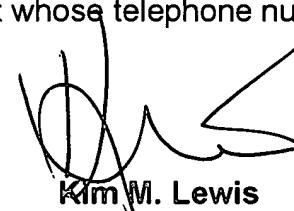
As regards claims 21-37, the claims are anticipated by claims 1-17 of the '564 patent since they are merely broader in scope.

As regards claims 38-41, the claims are anticipated by claims 19-21 and 18, respectively. The difference in the claims amount to the wording of the preamble; however, closing of an incision using the device of the '564 patent involves stretching of the skin. Other than the aforementioned difference, the claimed device and method are merely broader in scope.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Kim M. Lewis whose telephone number is 703.308.1191. The examiner can normally be reached on Mondays and Tuesdays from 5:30 am to 4:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Weilun Lo can be reached on 703.308.1957. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703.305.3590 for regular communications and 703.305.3590 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703.308.0858.



Kim M. Lewis
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3761

kml
October 1, 2003